Odyssey
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DECCAN Chronicle
THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
KOCHI | FRIDAY 16 | FEBRUARY 2018

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WEATHER

	Max	Min
Tvm	34°C	24°C
Kochi	32°C	25°C
Koz	33°C	25°C

Forecast: Partly cloudy sky

GOLD RATES

22 Karat: ₹2,835/gm
22 Karat: ₹22,600/sovereign

ASTROGUIDE

Kumbham 4, 1193
Avittam (6 nazhika 51 vinazhika)
Rahu kalam:
10.30 – 12.00 noon
Gulika kalam:
07.30 -09.00 am
Yamakandakalam:
03.00-04.30 pm
PRAYER
Fajar: 5.25 am
Zohar: 12.42 pm
Asar: 4.02 pm
Maghrib: 6.37 pm
Isha: 7.47 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.33 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.44 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 6.58 AM
MOONSET TODAY 7.02 PM

COUNTER POINT

Buy this real one which is cheaper than a toy gun!

IN BRIEF

Binoy cheque case settled

Thiruvananthapuram: The cheque case filed by a UAE-based businessman against CPM state secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan's son Binoy Kodiyeri has reportedly been settled out of court.
According to reports, the case was settled following the payment of 10 lakh dirhams (₹1.72 crore). P4

Three killed in building collapse

Bengaluru: At least three labourers have died and one was critically injured after a five-storeyed under-construction building collapsed at Kasavanahalli's Sarjapur road in Bengaluru on Thursday.

Fishing boats launch stir

Kollam: The fishing sector was paralysed on Thursday with some 3,800 fishing boats across the state taking part in the indefinite protest called by the All-Kerala fishing boat operators association. P7

IAF pilots killed in crash

New Delhi: Two wing commanders of the IAF were killed as their micro-light aircraft crashed soon after takeoff from the Jorhat airbase in Assam on Thursday morning.
"The pilots, Wg Cdr J. James, belonging to Bengaluru, and Wg Cdr D. Vats, sustained fatal injuries, an IAF press release said. They attempted an emergency landing but the aircraft crashed in a sandbar and went up in flames. The IAF has lost 11 pilots, 25 aircraft and four helicopters since 2014.

Ramaphosa new SA prez

Cape Town: South African lawmakers formally named wealthy former businessman Cyril Ramaphosa as new president on Thursday. P11

STATE 4
Fatwa on *Adar* director, scholars denounce it

10 NATION
Priyanka moots ending contract with Nirav

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SC to pronounce verdict on Cauvery water today

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB. 15

ALL FOR WATER
- The 3-decades long water dispute is among Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Puducherry.
- Appeals were filed in SC against Cauvery Tribunal's verdict.

The Supreme Court will pronounce its verdict on Friday on a batch of appeals relating to the three decades old Cauvery water dispute among the States of Tamil nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and union territory of Puducherry.

A three-judge Bench of Chief Justices Dipak Misra and Justices Amitav Roy and D.Y. Chandrachud had reserved judgment on September 20, 2017 on appeals against the Cauvery Disputes Tribunal's final award of February 2007 on allocation of water for Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala and Union Territory of Puducherry.

Out of 740 tmcft of water available in the Cauvery basin, the Tribunal directed Karnataka to release 192 tmcft of water to Tamil Nadu, and apportioned 270 tmcft to Karnataka; 30 tmcft to Kerala and seven tmcft to Puducherry. and 192 tmcft to Tamil Nadu.

Besides adjudicating the share of water of each State, the court is expected to frame a scheme and mechanism for implementation of the water sharing arrangement. P10

Acetylene leak led to ship blast

DC CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI, FEB. 15

- It will now be probed why entrapment of the dangerous gas could not be detected in daily tests like gas fill permit.

The initial finding that the leakage of acetylene had led to the explosion on board oil rig 'Sagar Bhushan' at the Cochin Shipyard on Tuesday has been confirmed by the factories and boilers department. It would now investigate why entrapment of the dangerous gas could not be detected in daily tests like gas fill permit.

"We've received the medical report from the hospital where autopsy of the dead was conducted. All of them died inhaling toxic gas. There are possibilities of the formation of only two gases -- acetylene and oxygen during the ship repair work. Only acetylene turns into poisonous gas on burning. This confirms our initial suspicion," said department director P. Pramod.

Now the probe will focus on why the gas leakage was not detected. "We'll find out whether there was any negligence in following the standard safety practices on the day. The report which will include this angle will be filed in five days," the official said.

Earlier, the preliminary probe by the police too had found the leaked gas was acetylene. "We're probing how the leak occurred despite strict safety practices in place and whether there was any human error or not. We'll record the statement of all employees and witnesses before going through documents like log book," Mr P.P. Shams, assistant commissioner of police (ACP), Thrikkakara, said. P7

Fr Thomas

PRIEST BOOKED FOR RAPING BRITISH WOMAN

DC CORRESPONDENT
KOTTAYAM, FEB. 15

A 44-year-old Bangladesh-born British citizen, divorcee with 22-year-old son, has filed a rape and theft case against a Kerala priest.

Following the complaint, Kaduthuruthy police booked Fr Thomas Thanninilkumthasathil, the vicar of St Matthews Church, Perumthuruthu, who is since missing. The complaint says he befriended her on Facebook and invited her to visit Kerala. She came to Kaduthuruthy on December 31 with her British friend Kennedy Meindi and stayed there for a week.

She left for Mumbai on Feb 7, from where she returned to London on Jan 12. She came back on February 8 and registered the complaint on Wednesday. Circle inspector K.P. Thomson said the priest allegedly raped her during her first visit and the cops were verifying details.

According to the complainant, the priest had also stolen her diamond ring, mobile phone, gold ornaments and a few other things.

Pala diocese has taken away priestly responsibilities from him.

CPM LEADER HELD FOR HURTING PREG WOMAN

DC CORRESPONDENT
KOZHIKODE, FEB. 15

- Sibi Chacko and wife Jyolsna were attacked by the group and her four-month pregnancy was aborted following the injuries suffered by her.

Kodenchery Kallathramed CPM branch secretary Thampi Thettalil and five others were arrested after they surrendered at the Kodenchery police station on Thursday in connection with the attack on a pregnant woman and her family over a land dispute on January 28. Sibi Chacko and his wife Jyolsna Sibi of Velamkod Lakshamveedu colony were attacked by the group and her four-month pregnancy was aborted following the injuries suffered by her. As she started bleeding, she was rushed to the government MCH where she was under treatment for a week.

Their children were also present at the house at the time of the attack. The others arrested are Prajeesh's mother Sarasu (60), Joy Puthenkandathil (40), Saidalavi Malanparambil (40) and Binoy Valiya Parambil. They were produced before Thamarassery JFCM-2 and remanded for 14 days. P7

PVT BUS STRIKE STARTS TODAY FOR MORE HIKE

DC CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI, FEB. 15

Private buses will go on an indefinite strike from Friday protesting against the state government refusing to increase the minimum ordinary fare to ₹10 and leaving the student fares untouched.

A meet of the joint coordination committee of 12 bus owners' associations covering almost all private buses here on Thursday also decided to a hold a hunger strike before the secretariat on Monday. P10

PNB SCAM

NIRAV & CO HAVE FLED

- ED seizes jewels worth ₹5.1K cr; PNB had issued 150 letters

New Delhi, Feb. 15: Billionaire jewellery designer Nirav Modi and other members of his family, who fled the country last month, allegedly made fraudulent transactions of over Rs 11,400 crore through 150 letters of understanding issued by the Punjab National Bank, officials said.

Nirav Modi, who holds an Indian passport, left India on January 1, while his brother Nishal, a Belgian citizen, also left the country on same day. However, whether they travelled together has to be probed, they said.

Nirav Modi's wife Ami, a US citizen, left on January 6 and his uncle and business partner Mehul Choksi, the promoter of Gitanjali jewellery chain, left on January 4, the officials said.

The bank became suspicious only on January 16 when the accused companies --Diamond R US, Solar Exports and Stellar Diamonds (all accused in the CBI FIR) -- approached it with import documents and a request to issue Letters of Understanding (LoUs) for raising buyers' credit for making payments to the overseas suppliers.

The bank, however, could not find any past entries in the system, the FIR has alleged. It approached the CBI on January 29 with a complaint of 1280 crore fraud, officials said.Nirav Modi, who is believed to be in Switzerland, was also present in a group photograph of Indian CEOs with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, issued by the Press Information Bureau, during the World Economic Forum on January 23, six days before the bank sent its first complaint against him to the CBI, according to the officials.

The agency immediately swung into action registering an FIR on January 31 followed by searches at 20 locations in Mumbai and Surat and issued a look out circular on February 4 against Nirav Modi and three absconding accused, they said.

A look out circular is issued by enforcement agencies to all exit and entry ports to inform them about the movement of an accused.

Nirav Modi, a regular on the lists of rich and famous Indians since 2013, was booked by the CBI, along with wife, brother and business partner Choksi on January 31, for allegedly cheating the state-run Punjab National Bank to the tune of Rs 280 crore.

The bank again approached the CBI within a fortnight of the first complaint giving details of more transactions which were over Rs 11,400 crore. The question why the PNB did not send a complaint to the CBI and decided to give it in tranches is also under the scanner of the agency, they said. An LoU is a letter of comfort issued by one bank to branches of other banks, based on which foreign branches offer credit to buyers. P10

CBI, ED FILE PLEA TO REVOKE PASSPORT

New Delhi, Feb. 15: Central investigation agencies on Thursday turned up the heat on embattled jewellery designer Nirav Modi in a huge bank fraud case, by seizing diamond and gold jewellery worth ₹5,100 crore in nationwide searches and initiating the process for revoking his passport, officials said.

The CBI and the ED moved separate applications to the external affairs ministry seeking the revocation of passports of Modi and his maternal uncle Mehul Choksi, the promoter of Gitanjali jewellery chain, both accused in the 280-crore bank fraud case the officials said. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) completed the analysis of computers seized from premises linked to him and was going through the two fresh complaints received from Punjab National Bank (PNB) on Tuesday that it had been defrauded of ₹ 11,400 crore to decide its future course of action.

The day for companies and outlets owned or partnered by the 46-year-old diamond merchant, who has fled the country on January 1, began with the Enforcement Directorate (ED) carrying out searches at properties linked to him in Mumbai, Delhi and Gujarat and claiming to have seized gold and diamond jewellery and precious stones worth ₹5,100 crore. —PTI

Third front likely to spoil Opposition unity plans

SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY | DC
NEW DELHI, FEB. 15

Putting another spanner into the Congress' dreams of a unified Opposition and forming a grand alliance for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, a section of regional satraps and the Left parties have begun parleys to cobble up a "third front".

The parties which have begun talks include the Bahujan Samaj Party, Janata Dal (Secular), Rashtriya Lok Dal, Biju Janata Dal, the Left parties and Trinamul Congress. The first such experiment is likely to be tried out in the coming crucial Lok Sabha bypolls in three Uttar Pradesh seats — Kairana, Phulpur and Gorakhpur.

It is learnt either RLD chief Ajit Singh or his son Jayant Chowdhary will be made the front's candidate from Kairana, with the BSP's help. The seat had fallen vacant after the death of BJP MP Hukum Singh. The seeds for this alliance were sown with the coming together of the BSP and Janata Dal (Secular), led by former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, in Karnataka. Mr Deve Gowda has already asked the Left parties to join the alliance.

Asked about this, CPI general secretary Sudhakar Reddy came out into the open on Thursday and made it clear the Communists were open to the idea. "We are open to such an alliance both in Karnataka and elsewhere, like UP, but it needs to be clarified the JD(S) will not join hands with the BJP in a post-poll scenario," he told this newspaper. Sources said Mr Deve Gowda may issue a statement in the next few days assuring his party "will have nothing to do with the BJP" in order to assuage the doubts of the Left parties. However, wile these parties are unlikely to go with the BJP, their reluctance to come under the Congress umbrella could end up helping the BJP as it will lead to a division in the secular votes.

EX-STUDENT SHOOTS 17 IN FLORIDA SCHOOL

Washington, Feb. 15: A former student armed with an assault-style rifle went on a shooting spree at a high school in Florida on Thursday, killing at least 17 people and injuring more than a dozen others, including an Indian-American student, in one of the deadliest mass shootings in the US. The 19 year-old suspect identified as Nikolas Cruz, a former student at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland who was expelled for disciplinary reasons, was arrested after the deadly rampage yesterday. The school has a large number of Indian-American students and at least one student from the community was injured. P11